

Rules Committee (RC)

10/19/2022

Attendee's: Miriah Kelly (EGMS), Jeffrey Webb (CHE), Richard Zippoli (CMDS), Troy Paddock (HIS)

Chair: Jeffrey Webb

The committee is still waiting on edits to several of our recent draft proposals from the E-Board so they can be moved into a formal resolution and brought to the floor of the faculty senate...

The committee then discussed our new charge of digging back into crafting a policy / system for student academic complaints. Where the chair brought forward our notes from previous discussions in the Spring when we started on this topic. (See previous meeting notes at the end of this document)

We then looked at the Southern Website for where such a policy might best be posted, maybe under student life adding a section like a Having a Problem? Or Having an Issue? ...

Another section was to maybe have a member of the student affairs staff that could be trained as an ombudsperson to support the students for issues like this.....(suggestion for a new position or responsibility) but their role would be just to direct them to the procedure on a website..)

We did all agree on a simple flowchart (or procedure):

Go to the Teacher or Instructor first; if not satisfied,

Then go to Dept Chairs Office; if not satisfied

Then go to Dean's Office; If not satisfied ??

The committee then split up and agreed to look into some university with something comparable on complaints we could use as a model.

We agreed to look into: our sister universities as well as some other comparable universities around the country: Like Bryant, UCONN, Oregon State, and some New York universities.

Meeting adjourned at 1:00 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Jeffrey A. Webb

Notes from RULES committee previous complaint policy discussion from Last Spring 2022:

3/23/22 meeting notes:

Committee starting on new topic of policies surrounding student complaints:

Guest: Associate Dean Dr. Craig Hlavac, Sara Gossman (SGA President)

The meeting started with a discussion with Dr. Hlavac about the issue and what he has seen about student complaints in the Dean's office. (see below for a formal request Dr. Hlavac made for the senate to look into this issue)

I am writing to request an ad hoc committee be formed to discuss the development of a unified policy surrounding student complaints. In each of our roles, we have heard from students and faculty with thoughts on how student concerns are either collected or addressed – and often not in a positive light. Most students are not well-informed about the specific levels of our organization and thus do not know where to turn should they have a concern. In many cases, this means students come to administrative offices when their issue might be better dealt with at the department level. On the other hand, on occasion there are instances in which a student concern is serious enough that the administration should be alerted and be part of the resolution process. Unfortunately, in my experience, these processes are not well-defined.

Dr. Hlavac remarked that he see's Chair's (of various department's) regularly ask why is the dean's office involved in things that the chair should be responsible for, when it was a student who approaches the Dean's office first. This is especially an issue when student go to the President or the Dean of Students, since these referrals need to be acted upon by that office. Dr. Hlavac also discussed how he felt with some of the complaints there was a need for the student to be heard and responded to in a timely manner.

A committee member suggested the Ombudsman as a possible place for complaints to go and get routed.

Another committee member suggested that polices or language for this should also be included for students as part of maybe an FYE or INQ class. This was mainly because one of the primary issues is students who are unaware of where / who to go to with complaints.

Another member suggested that this committee needs to take care to stay in our lane and develop policy for academic complaints/issues.

Another member suggested that this should go on a one stop website where students can access it easily.

Sara then addressed the committee about this issue from the student point of view: She Talked about how this should be mainly academic complaints, she advocated for some streamlined ways to submit concerns to the right office.... Maybe a website where students could find the right place to go for concerns, whether they be tech, academic, or other.... Because the problem as she see's it is that

students regularly are NOT aware of the process and where / who to talk too. She also advocated to keep the information/policy clear and concise for 1st generation students to be able to easily read and understand, since in her opinion policy language often gets confusing and is left unread when students get confused or frustrated.

As the meeting was wrapping up several members discussed possibly building of the structure in the grade appeal policy or academic misconduct policies as we construct this academic complaint policy / procedure. The committee also discussed with the guest's about anonymity with the complaints. This led to a broader discussion of the power dynamic inherent to the student/teacher relationship and a member suggested that the policy also mention the end of semester student survey's as a possible (additional) route for students to maintain their anonymity with complaints.

More notes from RULES 4/20/22 meeting:

After a discussion of those final proposed edits the committee then moved onto our next task looking into developing a academic student complaint procedure. Building off the discussion with the interested parties at our last subcommittee meeting, the members discussed ideas on how to begin developing/formulating a formal Academic Student Complaint Procedure for possible implementation in the future.